

2. **Topography.** China's mountains, plateaus, and hills constitute four fifths of the country's land surface. The remaining one-fifth consists of coastal and river plains. Despite the mountainous terrain, the ancient Chinese migrated, spread their culture, and maintained a degree of cultural and political unity.

3. **Important Rivers:** Yangtze and Hwang Ho (Yellow River). Flowing several thousand miles eastward from the Tibetan highlands, the *Yangtze River* in central China and the *Hwang Ho* (Yellow River) in northern China both empty into the Pacific Ocean. These rivers drain China's heavily populated fertile plains. Because of its devastating floods, the Yellow River is often called "China's sorrow."

HISTORY OF ANCIENT CHINA

1. **Early Yellow River Valley Civilization** (4000-2000 B.C.). China's first civilization, like those of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and India, evolved from river valley conditions: fertile soil, uncertain rainfall, and disastrous floods. In the Yellow River region, the people raised agricultural produce, herded animals, used bows and spears, and made crude pottery. They lived in small self-governing villages.

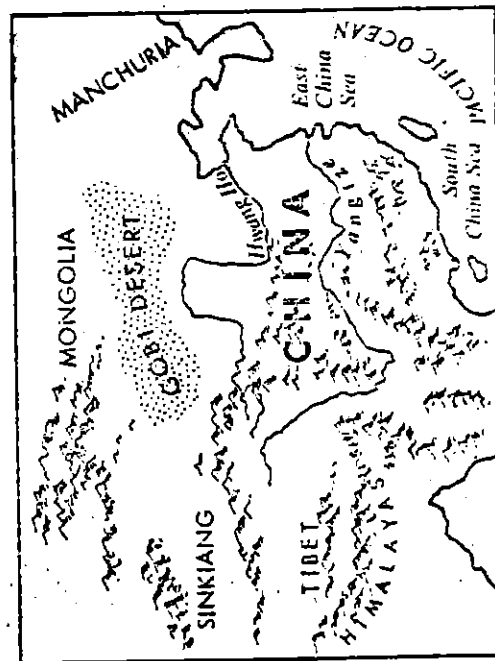


The Early River Valley Civilizations

Part 3. Ancient China: Development of an Inbred Civilization

GEOGRAPHIC FACTORS INFLUENCING ANCIENT CHINA

1. **Location and Boundaries.** China, a huge country in eastern Asia, comprises China proper and the outlying regions of Tibet, Sinkiang, Mongolia, and Manchuria. In ancient times, China proper was virtually isolated from the surrounding world by such natural barriers as the *Gobi Desert*, the *Tibetan mountain plateau* (sometimes called the "Roof of the World"), and the *Pacific Ocean*. (See the map below.) Little affected by outside cultures (except for India's Buddhism), China developed an inbred civilization.



Ancient China: Geographic Factors

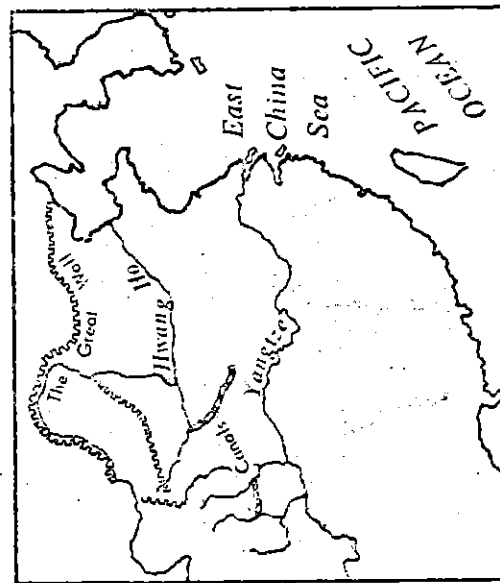
2. Hsia Dynasty (2090-1500 B.C.). According to legend, Hsia, China's first dynasty (a succession of kings from the same family), ruled the eastern Yellow River city-states. During this period, the Chinese began casting bronze, cultivating silk worms, and, reputedly, writing.

3. Shang Dynasty (1500-1000 B.C.). The Shang Dynasty developed a highly organized state in the Hwang Ho Plain. To protect their domain, Shang warriors frequently fought frontier tribes. During this period, the Chinese produced artistic bronze implements and beautiful pottery; wrote on shells, metal, and wood; and began to worship their ancestors.

4. Chou Dynasty (1090-256 B.C.). The Chou, the longest-ruling dynasty, first overran Shang territory and then temporarily occupied part of the Yangtze Valley. Later Chou kings, unable to maintain authority, lost power to provincial nobles.

The Chou Period witnessed the introduction of iron implements, written laws, and metal coins. This era, China's "classical age," produced memorable literature and such renowned philosophers as Lao-tse and Confucius. (see page 31).

5. Ch'in Dynasty (255-206 B.C.). The Ch'in was a short-lived but significant dynasty whose outstanding ruler was the self-named *Shih Huang Ti*, meaning the *First Emperor*. To bar northern invaders, he linked existing sectional fortifications into the 1,500-mile *Great Wall*. He expanded the Empire southward by annexing the Yangtze region and gaining nominal control of southern China.



Ch'in: The First Empire

Shih Huang Ti sought vigorously to unify the country (a) *politically*—by creating a strong centralized government, suppressing nobles, appointing provincial governors responsible to him, and enforcing a uniform legal code, (b) *physically*—by building roads, bridges, and canals, and (c) *culturally*—by simplifying and standardizing writing.

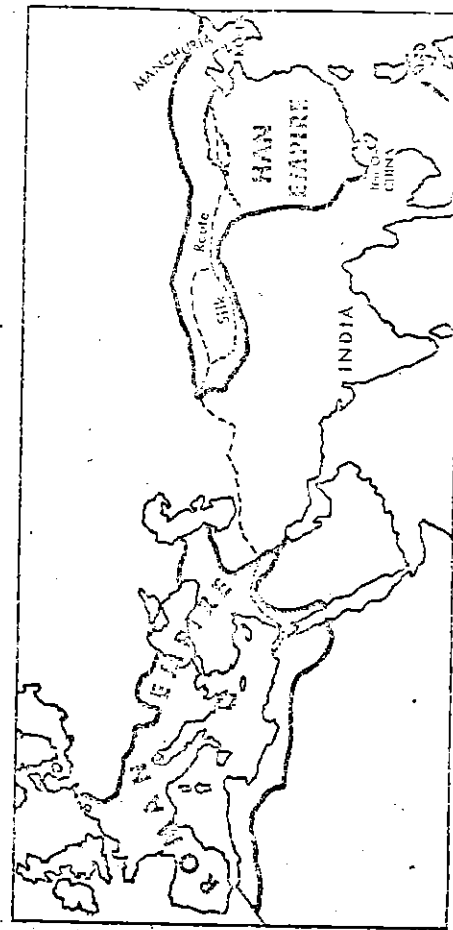
Also to provide unity, he attempted to eradicate knowledge of China's past political and cultural diversity by ordering the burning of most books.

From *Ch'in* was derived the name *China*.

6. Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.). Han rulers (a) preserved political unity with a tightly centralized administration, (b) promoted Confucianism, even selecting government officials by tests on Confucian literature, (c) allowed Buddhism to be introduced from India, (d) established overland trade routes over which Chinese silks and spices reached the Roman-dominated Mediterranean world, and (e) expanded the Chinese Empire to Indo-China, central Asia, southern Manchuria, and northern Korea.

The Han Empire marked the height of ancient China's power, prosperity, and culture. Literature, art, science, and industry flourished as never before. The Chinese are so proud of this period that they often call themselves "the sons of Han."

The fall of the Han Dynasty was followed by four centuries of civil war, invasion, and political confusion. These turbulent years led many Chinese to accept Buddhism because it promised eternal peace (see page 26).



The Han Empire (1st Century A.D.)

ANCIENT CHINA'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO CIVILIZATION

1. Religion and Philosophy

a. *Lao-tse* (6th Century B.C.). For man to attain happiness, the philosopher Lao-tse taught: (1) Governments should minimize their controls over man. Since laws cannot improve man's condition, he should be permitted to conduct his own affairs. (2) Man should passively accept his lot in life. He can achieve peace of mind only by practicing humility and by renouncing wealth and prestige. He should live in a simple manner in harmony with "Tao," "the way of nature."

Centuries later, Lao-tse's teachings, distorted by magic and combined with ideas of personal immortality, became part of the polytheistic religion Taoism.

b. *Confucius* (551-479 B.C.). To improve society and achieve good government, the great philosopher Confucius formulated a code of ethical conduct. He taught that man should be guided by the following "virtues": (1) Careful observance of ancient traditions. (2) Reverence for learning. (3) Cherishing of honesty. (4) Devotion to parents, family, and friends, and obedience to the rule "What you do not want done to you, do not do to others."

Whereas Lao-tse advocated a passive life for the individual and urged the least possible government, Confucius advocated man's active participation in society and recommended vigorous government action. He further believed that a ruler who practiced the Confucian virtues would govern as an influential, fatherly force. Unlike other Oriental philosophies, Confucianism placed little emphasis on the hereafter.

As *Confucianism* evolved, the original stress on tradition became associated with ancestor worship. For more than 2,000 years, Confucianism dominated Chinese daily life and politics. Confucian writings served as official school textbooks. By emphasizing tradition and ancestor worship, Confucianism stabilized society but retarded progress.

c. *Intermingling Beliefs*. The Chinese did not believe it illogical to live according to principles taken from different philosophies. While universally accepting Confucianism, many Chinese simultaneously practiced Buddhism and Taoism.

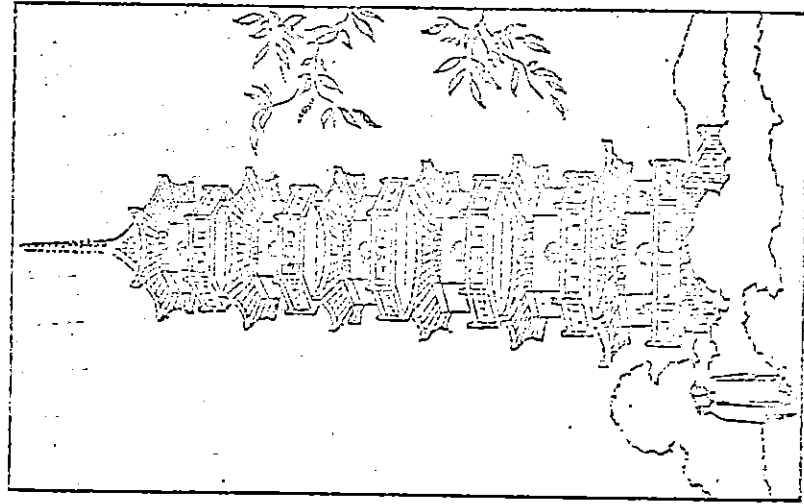
2. *Strong Family Ties*. In keeping with Confucian teachings, the family—not the individual—became the basic unit of Chinese life. The family included all relatives. Living together or near one another, they sometimes constituted an entire village. The oldest male was the honored and obeyed family head. The family assumed responsibility for the livelihood and good conduct of its members. Marriage was not intended for individual happiness, but to perpetuate the family.

Intense family loyalty hampered the development of Chinese nationalism.

3. *Written Language and Literature*. Complex Chinese writing existed 1,500 B.C. Lacking an alphabet, it employed up to 40,000 characters (originally pictures), each representing a distinct idea or sound. The result—difficulty in reading and writing sharply limited Chinese literacy. (Recent attempts have been made to simplify Chinese writing by using a phonetic alphabet.)

Despite their complex written language, the Chinese created a noteworthy literature of poetry, history, and philosophy. The *Confucian Classics*, outstanding works, consist of (a) Confucius' collection of earlier writings, (b) Confucius' own sayings, the *Zi-tse-ks*, and (c) commentaries by later philosophers. The Imperial Library housed an extensive collection of books and manuscripts.

4. *Art and Architecture*. The ancient Chinese created elaborately decorated bronze and clay vases. They fashioned fine jewelry and figurines, using their most prized stone, jade. Chinese artists excelled in expressive, stylized art.



Chinese Architecture: A Pagoda

EARLY CIVILIZATIONS OF THE FAR EAST

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politic landscape paintings. Chinese musicians developed an advanced music, different from that known in the Western world. Chinese architects, in designing palaces and pagodas, favored wood and stone columns, highly ornamented walls, and gaily colored tiled roofs. The most distinctive Chinese structure was the *pagoda*—a many-storied, tapered temple with a series of upward-curving roofs.

5. Science and Technology. The Chinese invented sundials, water clocks, and instruments to detect earthquakes. Their astrologers contributed to astronomy by observing sunspots, studying eclipses, and devising a solar calendar of 365 1/4 days. Chinese farmers plowed the land, used fertilizer, and rotated crops. The Chinese also wove silk cloth and produced glazed pottery plates (chinarware). About 100 A.D. they discovered how to make paper.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. The Indian subcontinent is separated from the rest of Asia by the (1) Gobi Desert (2) Ganges River (3) Himalaya Mountains (4) Deccan Plateau.
2. Ancient invaders entered India from the northwest because (1) most invaders came from Europe (2) the northwest of India was unpopulated (3) the Khyber Pass provided an invasion route (4) the northwest of India consisted of open plains.
3. India's coasts are not washed by the (1) Indian Ocean (2) China Sea (3) Bay of Bengal (4) Arabian Ocean.
4. Two ancient cities, where excavations have revealed much of India's early civilization, were (1) Harappa and Delhi (2) Harappa and Mohenjo-daro (3) Delhi and Bombay (4) Mohenjo-daro and Bombay.
5. The Vedas were (1) religious writings (2) priests (3) iron swords (4) Hindu gods.
6. The Maurya Empire originated in (1) Ceylon (2) India's Deccan (3) India's northern plains (4) the plateau of Iran.
7. The period of disorder from the end of the Maurya Empire to the beginning of the Gupta Empire lasted approximately (1) 10 (2) 100 (3) 300 (4) 500 years.
8. The Gupta Period is sometimes called India's "golden age" because its (1) crafts men sculpted many gold statues (2) writers, artists, scientists, and mathematicians brought forth great achievements (3) merchants secured much gold in exchange for exports of Indian goods (4) rulers conquered the rich gold mines of the Deccan.
9. The Brahmins, the highest Hindu caste, were (1) rulers and warriors (2) merchants (3) priests (4) farmers.
10. The caste system emphasized (1) national unity (2) local community cooperation (3) racial equality (4) strict segregation.
11. The Hindu belief that each person's soul experiences many rebirths is called (1) restitution (2) reincarnation (3) religion (4) evolution.
12. Gautama, the 6th-century B.C. philosopher, was entitled "Buddha," meaning the (1) great nobleman (2) enlightened teacher (3) stone heart (4) fierce warrior.
13. Buddhism and Buddhism both agree that man's life on earth (1) is one of sorrow (2) is preparation for immediate entrance to heaven (3) must conform to caste rules (4) is the same as his ultimate goal of Nirvana.
14. Today Buddhist influence is least evident in (1) India (2) Ceylon (3) Japan (4) Burma.
15. Kaishan, who lived in the 5th century A.D., was a great (1) mathematician (2) ruler (3) playwright (4) religious reformer.

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WORLD HISTORY

10. One achievement in ancient India *not* paralleled in ancient Greece was in (1) writing epic poems (2) relating animal fables (3) prescribing an ethical code for doctors (4) developing a simplified way of writing numbers.
17. Ancient China, in its natural boundaries and their effect upon China's civilization, most closely resembles (1) Egypt (2) Babylonia (3) northern India (4) Persia.
18. Asia, China's first dynasty, is legendary, meaning that (1) its rulers were great warriors (2) its writers wrote imaginative novels (3) its existence has not been confirmed by archaeological evidence (4) its people worshipped many gods.
19. Ancient China's longest-ruling dynasty was the (1) Shang (2) Chou (3) Ch'ing (4) Han.
20. The first Emperor of the Ch'in Dynasty, Shih Huang Ti, ordered the burning of books because he (1) feared that an educated people might revolt (2) feared that knowledge of China's past would hamper his efforts to establish a centralized government (3) wanted to combat monotheism (4) wanted scholars to produce original works.
21. While the Han Dynasty ruled in China, the Mediterranean world was dominated by (1) Egypt (2) Persia (3) Greece (4) Rome.
22. The philosopher Lao-tse taught that man could achieve happiness by (1) relying upon the government (2) accepting, with humility, his lot in life (3) pursuing wealth and giving it to the poor (4) reforming the evils of the world.
23. The philosopher Confucius formulated a code of conduct whose chief purpose was to (1) improve society and government (2) prepare man's soul for the hereafter (3) enable the Chou rulers to retain power (4) encourage the Chinese to conquer all of eastern Asia.
24. Confucianism encouraged the Chinese people to (1) learn from foreigners (2) experiment with new food crops (3) respect traditional ways of doing things (4) seek principles of science.
25. Confucianism encouraged a feeling of intense loyalty to the (1) family (2) province (3) neighboring warlord (4) nation.
26. Which was *not* an achievement of ancient China? (1) a solar calendar (2) glazed pottery (3) a phonetic alphabet (4) the making of paper.

COMPLETION QUESTIONS

Provide the word or expression that completes the statement correctly.

1. The earliest civilization in India developed in the valley of the _____ River.
2. The invading peoples who brought Sanskrit into India were the _____.
3. The European conqueror who in the 4th century B.C. extended his empire into northwest India was _____.
4. The great Maurya ruler who, after renouncing war, governed according to Buddhist ideals was _____.
5. The sacred river of the Hindu religion is the _____.
6. Early civilization in China developed in the valley of the _____ River.
7. Han rulers selected government officials by "civil service" examinations based upon a knowledge of the _____ Classics.
8. A major religious development during the Han Era was the introduction of _____.
9. The most distinctive Chinese structure, typified by a series of upward-curving roofs, is called a(n) _____.